

Steve Cartwright

Bricks

There are bricks and there are bricks.
There are bricks you love and there are bricks you hate...
And I suppose there are some bricks that slip into the middle bracket...neither here nor there kind of bricks.
Fair to middlin'.
But not bricks that get you all fired up you know.
These bricks I hate... I do.
That homogenous mass of shiny fake terra cotta, not different in any way, shape or form, one from the other
Oozing a wet salt stain as they settle... like lavatories leaking.
They proliferate in their zillions on the sprawl of new housing, office block, university, library and law court.
They shout "stick a zinc roof on 'ere mate and piss off quick"
They are the crisp packet in the hedgerow and the polystyrene in the flower bed.
They offend tree and sky and they annihilate joy.
They are rancid mediocrity; the first signs of hell... and their mates are the blue bricks.
Their enamelled fascias are pocked with the erupting boils of saltpetre.
Their colour is the poison in smoke.
Their texture is the cloying of clinker and used coke.
They hang heavy as doom on bridges and railway stations or in the footings of buildings.
Where they are used as diamond patterns on their terra cotta mates they shout
"Oi you, look at my complete lack of imagination...
I am heavy-haunched, pouting and spotty.
I have neither grace nor beauty."
Even the trees and shrubs cannot efface their ugliness and the birds of the air flee from them.
They are the vampire bricks... they cannot age nor die...
Nor wind nor rain nor frost nor ice nor storm can save them. They are doomed by their own invincibility.
They are an abomination.
They are the unbricks.
But, god love us.
True bricks do still roam the earth.
Hiding in some county village or isolated farm or maybe the facade of a Tudor mansion preserved for the tourist trade.
They eke a paltry living and often do not know where their next meal is coming from.
Yet they are so beautiful.
Old commons or rustic facias.
Bricks which celebrate their different form and colour. Bricks which grasp the ivy and the vine.
Rejoicing in the Triffid footing whereby they suckle.
Bricks so fat and heavy they lie in a bulging mattress of sand and cement... dipping out of line.
Joyful and welcoming...
At one with their mates...the beech sash, the wormy oak door, the worn flag stone or the grainy rafter.
These are bricks which shout joy to the eye.
Their soft clayiness jumbling in with tree and meadow.
Soaking up the weather and wearing it.
Ageing, crumbling gracefully, gathering the soft moss and the splash of the lichen staining.
Absorbing, drinking in reflecting.
Surely when they die they go to heaven to be reborn as wizards... And make all the naughty vampire bricks go away...

